

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 1996



MONTANA
State
Library

Statewide Library Resources

Statewide Library Resources (SLR) is the library within the State Library agency. SLR provides reference and information services to state agencies, state employees, librarians across Montana, and the general public; and lends materials either directly to users or through public, school, special or academic libraries.

SLR provides centralized library material acquisition, cataloging and technical processing, and operates the state's documents depository center.

Staff members of the Statewide Library Resources program also consult with librarians, administer grants, produce publications, conduct workshops and otherwise assist librarians in serving their patrons with a high degree of professionalism.

SERVICES

In fiscal year 1996 [FY96], SLR responded to 4,281 requests from state government workers by providing 3,704 circulation items and performing 700 online searches. SLR staff served other libraries in the state by providing 7,633 circulation items, distributing 4,423 state publications and performing over 350 online searches. In addition, SLR staff answered 2,461 information requests from public libraries and 4,637 requests from academic, school or special libraries.

SLR responded to:
4,281 requests from state government workers
2,461 information requests from public libraries
4,637 requests from academic, school or special libraries
And provided other libraries with:
7,633 circulation items ↔ 4,423 state publications
over 350 online searches ↔ over 3,600 consultations

SLR staff consulted over 3,600 times with librarians on the many issues related to libraries, such as:

- methods and jurisdictions,
- budgeting,
- how to get mill levies passed,
- library construction,
- censorship,
- literacy,
- automation,
- children's services,
- public relations,
- collection management,
- voluntary certification,
- library designs,
- Friends and Foundation groups,
- board development and policies.

SLR administers federation support for public libraries through the Information Access Montana Act and the Coal Severance Tax plus grants through the federal Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA).

LSCA grants are used to extend library services to underserved patrons or to those with inadequate services, for interlibrary cooperation, and construction and remodeling projects. In FY96 SLR administered the LSCA funded grant programs which were delayed by an appeal process and by federal funding delays. Some of the projects for 1996

include Internet connectivity and infrastructure for nine libraries or library systems, as well as a library construction project for Sheridan, Montana.

SLR staff worked with the Statewide

Technology Committee on various statewide projects, including committee work for a Statewide Technology report. The final report will be available in FY97.

In FY96, SLR staff completed a Family Reading Program Manual which was cooperatively produced with the Office of Public Instruction and was distributed to Montana school and public libraries. The Family Reading Program theme was "Everyone a winner...Read". Users of the manual reported great success for the many happy participants.

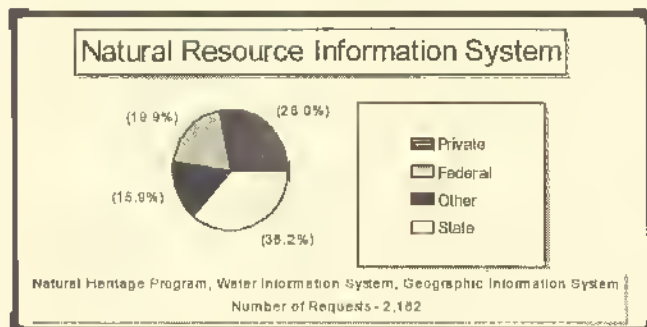
Other SLR publications include an annual library directory, public library statistics, brochures, press releases, and the LSCA application manual.

INSTITUTIONAL SERVICES

SLR staff coordinates library services to all state institutions. This coordination takes two forms: consulting assistance and materials budgets for those institutions with staffed libraries, and contracting with nearby public libraries to provide library services to institutionalized residents.

COLLECTION

The State Library's general collection gained 641 new titles in FY96, while 8,855 titles were discarded in preparation for the new State Library automation system. The total number of titles in the general collection is 65,023. The Federal publication collection had 7,497 titles added for a total of 311,860 publications. The state publication collection gained 115 new titles for a total of 13,625 titles. One title was added to the periodical collection and six titles were weeded for an ongoing total of 527 titles.



Natural Resource Information System

The Montana Natural Resource Information System [NRIS] provides comprehensive access to information about Montana's natural resources to all Montanans through the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of that information in a meaningful form. NRIS was formed in response to the growing need for quick access to the increasing amounts of natural resource information. As a program of the Montana State Library, NRIS works to make information on Montana's natural resources easily and readily accessible. Serving government agencies, business and industry, and private citizens, NRIS operates a clearinghouse and referral service to link users with the best information. In 1985, NRIS began by providing services through its Montana Natural Resource Index and the Montana Natural Heritage Program. In response to growing user needs, the program expanded to include the Montana Water Information System and the NRIS Geographic Information System.

Over the years, NRIS strived to meet the growing information needs and challenges of Montana's governmental agencies, private business, and general public by developing new services. NRIS now offers a wide variety of data management, information indexing, and data retrieval services.

Fiscal year 1996 was a busy time for NRIS. We filled over 2,180 requests for natural resource information and services. The **Natural Heritage Program** responded to over 750 requests; the **Water Information System** responded to over 560 information requests; and the

Geographic Information System
responded to over 860 service and information requests.

Geographic Information System

During FY96, the NRIS GIS program continued providing a diverse array of products and services to Montana's GIS community. Some services were the traditional mediated services where we assist GIS users on an individual basis. Some services were new network-based services where we publish information on the Internet that patrons can access themselves.

As GIS technology matures and becomes more integrated into organizations, the demand for analytical applications has been increasing. As one of the leaders in the use of GIS technology in Montana, NRIS GIS is asked frequently to assist in developing major GIS analytical applications. This year, we undertook three major analytical projects: two for the US Forest Service and one for the Department of Health and Environmental Sciences.

With the maturing of our Internet services during FY96, the way NRIS GIS conducts business is fundamentally changing. We now have an increased ability to invest time and resources in building an information infrastructure that permits us to publish data and information that can and is accessed by many users. After we publish data and information on the Internet our patrons can access the information at their convenience without impacting NRIS GIS staff. This allows us to meet the needs of a much larger community and frees up resources to provide a higher level of service to those who need it.

Natural Heritage Program

Refining access to and delivery of program information remained a priority in

1996. A pilot project between The Nature Conservancy and the National Biological Service helped us develop new features on the Internet including: an on-line request form; better graphics capabilities; data searches based on county or species status; and a prototype sensitive species guidebook. Results of this project will be applied in other states as their data management and Internet capabilities allow. Linkages with GIS and development of new databases and systems, described below, have continued to allow us to stay abreast with the rising demands for information on biodiversity and land management.

The Heritage Program conducted significant research and inventory projects during the year, incorporated the results of these projects into its database system, and continued to provide information services to state and federal agencies, county and local offices, private consulting firms and academic and foreign requestors.

Approximately 1,500 data requests were received and answered in FY 1996, from all sectors: state, federal, local government as well as the private sector. This figure includes requests placed by U.S. Forest Service staff in Region 1 via a subset of Heritage data available on their mainframe system. These figures do not include the over 13,000 visits to our Internet site.

Water Information System

During 1996, staff continued improving access to water data by increasing the number of Internet links to new and existing sources of water information. Also during this time, many of the data sources established new products and report formats on the Internet. These new products make water information easier to obtain and interpret. Together with the Water Information

System's efforts, these new products represent major strides that improve service to end users by making it easier to obtain information in ready-to-use formats. Many more users are taking advantage of the improved service, a fact demonstrated by the dramatic increase in the number of users obtaining water data directly via the Internet during the reporting period.

The Water Information System continues to use geographic information system (GIS) and new relational data base technologies increasingly to serve system users by developing tools for a variety of water-related applications. This year staff assisted personnel from several other state agencies in obtaining and applying the GIS as an effective desktop tool for well head protection and management of solid waste landfill sites. Significant progress was also achieved in using new relational data base software to develop data bases with user interface menus that support traditional information management applications both within NRIS and other state natural resource agencies.

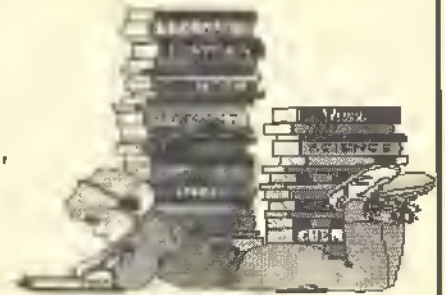
Montana Talking Book Library

The Montana Talking Book Library (MTBL) provides free library service to Montana citizens who cannot read standard print because of visual or other physical disability.

The MTBL loans books and magazines in a variety of formats to eligible individuals and institutions. Special playback equipment is also provided. All materials and equipment are provided at no charge and are mailed

"Free Matter" both to and from patrons. The MTBL is a regional branch of the Library of Congress which provides recorded books, braille materials and special playback equipment.

The circulation for FY96 was 154,520 to approximately 2,600 patrons. The library has 6 full time staff but because of the large number of books circulated, MTBL continues to rely on volunteers to help accomplish daily tasks.



During FY96 100 persons contributed to the Montana State Library and its programs through the auspices of the agency's volunteer program. This included all volunteer support at the State Library itself, plus the Telephone Pioneers and the inmate employees of the Montana State Prison Recording Program. These volunteers and inmate employees contributed a total of 13,225 hours during FY96.

The 1996 Volunteer Appreciation Banquet honoring MSL volunteers was held at the Great Divide Ski Lodge. Freddie Peaco, Volunteer/Government-Information Specialist from the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped in Washington, DC was the guest speaker. Peaco also spent several days at MTBL evaluating the volunteer program and working with State Library staff on the use of volunteers.

The Montana Cassette Book Program, comprising volunteers who record materials by Montana authors or about Montana, continued to produce quality materials during FY96. Two recording studios are located at the

Montana State Prison in Deer Lodge, and the third is at the State Library. In 1996, 45 books were recorded by volunteer and inmate recording teams. Hundreds of additional titles remain to be recorded and completed books are in high demand.

The outreach emphasis in FY96 continued to be raising awareness of the service among Native American populations. MTBL staff spoke to the Montana Tribal College Librarians at their meeting in Billings. A public forum was held at the Fort Peck Community College Tribal Library in Poplar.

MTBL's descriptive video library grew to a total of 129 titles. The video collection and expenses associated with it is completely funded with donations.

state Librarian's Office

The State Library Commission accepted the resignation of State Librarian Richard Miller in December 1995 and appointed Darlene Staffeldt to the position of Acting State Librarian while a search for a replacement was conducted. Karen Strege was appointed as the new State Librarian in August, 1996.

The Missoula Public Library Board of Trustees informed the State Library Commission of their intent to relinquish the position of Tamarack Federation headquarters library effective June 30, 1996. The Commission subsequently designated Lincoln County Library, Libby, as headquarters of that federation.

The terms of State Library commissioners Anne Hauptman (Billings) and Myrna Lundy (Fort Benton) expired in May 1996. They were replaced by Harold Stearns of Helena and Dorothy Laird of Kalispell respectively.

Language was added to ARM 10.102.5102 regarding the public library federations to clarify the State Library Commission's responsibility for approving federation plans of service and for approving or denying funding based on those plans. The new rule clarifies the criteria by which plans of service are approved and time lines for submission of the plans. There is new language about procedures for ensuring adequate representation from member libraries in development of the plans of service.

The Commission stated its priority for use of federal Library Services and Construction Act funds for FY98 to be "to make Internet, electronic and technological access available to all Montana libraries." This statement of intent continues their emphasis of FY96 and FY97.

Federal LSCA funding of \$99,874 for public library construction was awarded to the Sheridan Public Library. Following an initial award and appeals, FY96 LSCA grants for a variety of technological access projects were awarded to public libraries in Livingston, Hardin, Missoula, Libby, Miles City, Sidney, and Havre; and to Butte Central High School. FY97 LSCA grants with similar priorities were awarded to Sidney, Miles City, Havre, Libby, Missoula and Teton County public libraries; Sidney High School and the University of Montana Mansfield Library, pending availability of federal funding.

In December 1995 the State Library Commission received the results of the FY94/95 legislative audit which contained no recommendations for changes.

